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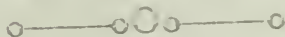
Three Years a Cowboy on the
Frontier of Texas Before
the Civil War

—and a—

Sketch of My Pioneer Days in the
Early Settling of Texas

— by —

W. O. WYNN



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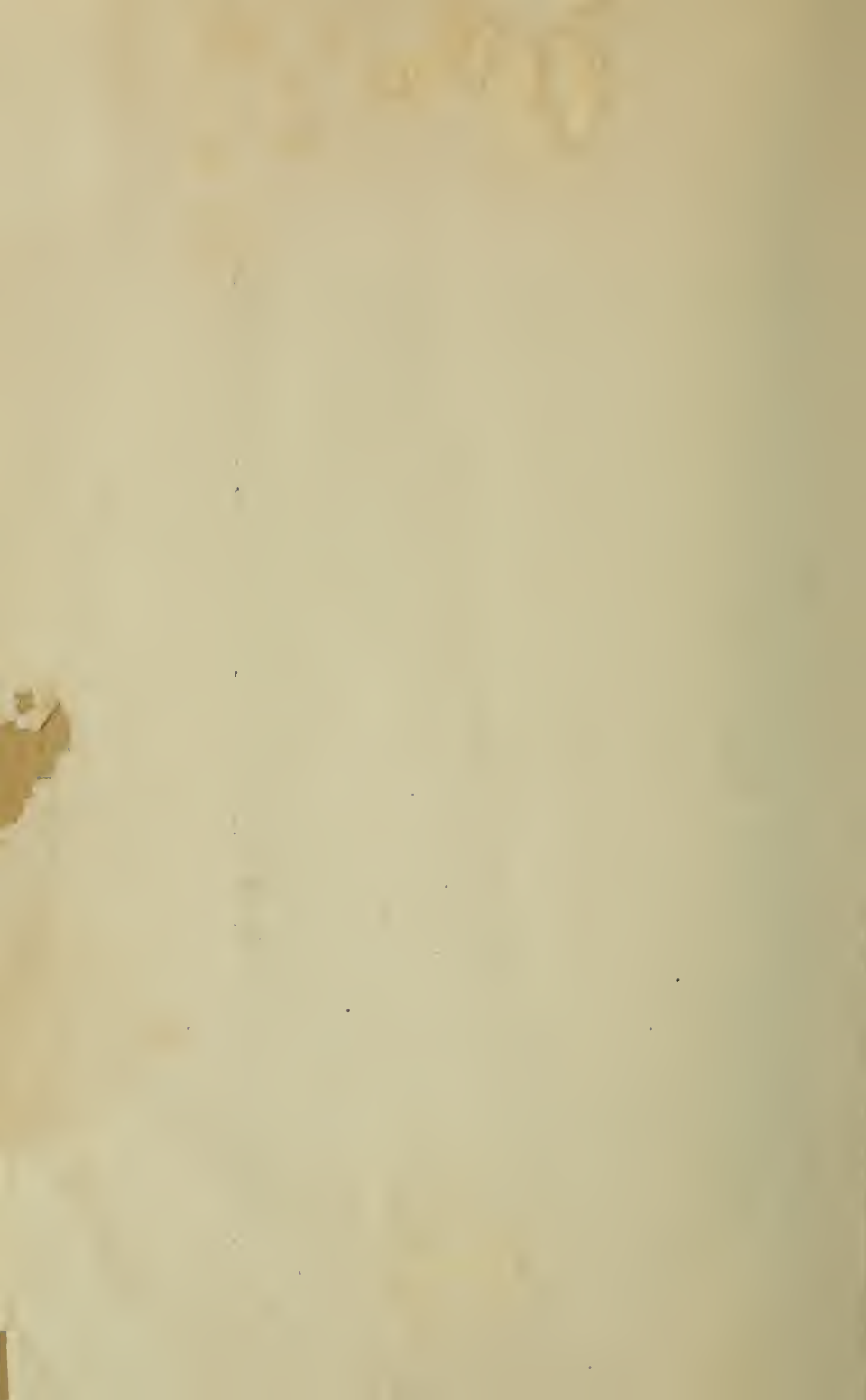
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W. O. WYNN



PREFACE

The object in view in writing this little volume was that it would be interesting to the sons and daughters of the old Confederate soldiers and also interesting to the soldiers who are yet living; and also extremely interesting to those who fought in the ditches by my side.

I am now in my 81st year and not able to make a living by manual labor and the sale of this pamphlet would help me financially in my old age.

W. O. WYNN.

Date - 1927

CHAPTER ONE

The writer of this little volume discovered America on the 17th day of April, 1846, in Sweetens Cove, Tennessee, Marion County. My father, James M. Wynn, had just got home from the Mexican War. In a battle in Mexico father was wounded by a Mexican bullet and sent to San Antonio hospital. When he got so he could travel was discharged and came home. He was gone 18 months. He was given a land certificate to 640 acres of land, which he laid in Panola County, Texas. 10 miles north of Carthage, which is the county site, on Martin's Creek; and in the fall of 1850 father sold out his possessions in old Tennessee and moved to his land in Texas. I was a little tot at the time and father thought it worth while and brought me along. Several other families came with us, so we had quite a crowd, all in ox wagons and ox carts. We were some six or seven weeks on the road, camping out, fishing and hunting and having a good time. We had in the crowd one school teacher, one young doctor and one young preacher and we did not need any lawyers. We reached our place of destination about the middle of the afternoon. After a long journey we beheld the new world.

So we belled and turned our stock loose. The range was sure fine. Everybody got busy clearing off ground to stretch our tents. I was a little tot, hopping around and making

myself very conspicuous. The crowd was overjoyed after their long journey.

It was seven miles to our nearest neighbor. The country was infested with wild animals: bear, panthers, wolves, wildeats, deer, turkeys, coons, o'possums, squirrels and skunks, and occasionally the Indians would make raids thru the country, murder the people and drive off our horses. However, we were well pleased with our new country. I thought of the Pilgrims when they landed at old Jimtown, Virginia, when Thanksgiving Day was set apart.

CHAPTER TWO

Well, reader, that night when the campfires were all lighted up, it was something new to those wild animals. Then the wolves began to gather around our camp and set up a howl. We had several dogs along and they were so scared that they just ran into the tents and lay down. The boys would go out occasionally and fire off their guns to scare the wolves away for awhile but they would come back. So, reader, there wasn't much sleep that night. Next morning the crowd began to spread around to make some discoveries of the new world which we had found. It wasn't long until part of the crowd came back loaded down with fresh meat. They had killed a lot of squirrels and two or three deer. We all enjoyed it very much, being so different from old Tennessee. And reader, it being the fall of the year, there had to be some houses built to prepare for winter. Timber was plentiful, so all

hands went to work and in short time several houses were reared up such as pine pole cabins using dirt floors. Sufficient tools were brought along for the purpose of building, knowing we were coming to a new country. So by the time cold weather set in, all of the families were nicely situated in a nice pine pole dwelling on a nice dirt floor. We had all the nice fresh meat to eat, such as squirrels, turkeys, and deer and the happiest bunch of pioneers you have ever seen and that settlement is known today as the Wynn Colony, 10 miles north of Carthage, in Panola County, Texas.

CHAPTER THREE

Well, reader, I will not dwell too long with my pioneer subject, but will pass on to my war history, which perhaps, will be more interesting. So all hands went to work clearing land, preparing for a crop and the next summer they built a nice pine pole school house, some 20 x 30 feet, chinked and daubed up the cracks with sticks and mud, using dirt floor and split log benches. And as we had brought a young school teacher along, we had our first school. In that school house the little tot learned his A. B. C's. Well, the next fall several other families moved out from old Tennessee and settled around and we had preaching occasionally: and had a nice country school and the little tot moved along very rapidly and soon became an expert reader and I delighted in reading history and I got hold of

some very interesting histories, Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone and the wild western scenes and Adam Poe and Bigfoot, the Indian fighters, and I craved a frontier life.

So in the fall of 1857 I left the old Wynn Colony with some stockmen and went to the frontier of Texas. When the Confederate War broke out I was leading the life of a cowboy in Johnson county, Texas, and was working for a man by the name of Dave Wilson. He had a large ranch on the Brazos river, west of Buckhannon, which was the county site at that time.

Well, readers, I had left the old Wynn Colony way back in east and had resolved to live a frontier life. I felt lonely thinking of home and everything that was dear and besides I had left the sweet little red headed girl that sat on those old stool benches in the pine pole school house back in the Wynn Colony, in old Panola county, Texas, who was my classmate. I loved her as dear as my life. I will speak of her later. Well, reader, being associated with a wild crowd, I soon got over that home-sick feeling to some extent. I will now give a little sketch of my experiences with the Indians.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Indians would make raids down thru the settlements occasionally, especially on moon shiny nights, drive out our stock and occasion-

ally murder a whole family of people. One night my boss came in late from Buckhannon. I had lain down when he called me. Says, "Billy, I want you to go up on Nolan's river in the morning and run in a bunch of cow ponies. There are Indians in the country and if they strike our horses they will run them out." It was about 12 or fourteen miles to where the horses run. He had a very fast horse, a blue stocking legged horse with a bald face. Called the blue Hornet. Told me, however, he had saved his life a time or two and he said: "Billy, listen, if you come in contact or get any way near the Indians, you can tell from the actions of your horse. He will stop, snort, and paw with his fore foot and want to turn back.

Next morning I saddled up the blue Hornet, put my carbine in the scaffold, buckled my old 44 around me and started after the horses. About 12 or fourteen miles north the path I was travelling crossed a very deep hollow, but few crossings, and this one was a cow ford, in fact, all the crossing I knew of for miles. However, after crossing the canyon I had to travel up a long slant about a mile before I reached the top so I could look out over the prairie. The blue Hornet stopped very suddenly, raised his head up high and snorted and began to paw with his fore foot and wanted to turn back. I straightened up in my saddle—could see nothing, but spurred him and went on. Just as I ascended the top of the rise, I looked over to my right and spied a bunch of Indians about two or three hundred yards off.

There were three or four riding some distance ahead of the main body. As soon as they saw me they gave a war whoop and waved their red handkerchiefs and here they came in full speed, shooting their bows and arrows. Well, the blue Hornet turned on his hind feet back down the path, making for the crossing on the big canyon. The Indians' aim was to cut me off from the crossing. They were nearly parallel with me. The nearer we got to the crossing the closer we came together. One of them was a little in advance of the others. I had emptied my carbine, thrown myself on the opposite side of my horse, shooting under the horses' neck. I thought at one time we would hit the ford at the same time, and reader, the blue Hornet was doing his best. The arrows were flying over, zip, zip, but they never hit me. They stuck two in my saddle, but just before I reached the ford the front Indian's horse fell and the Indian hit the ground just a few feet from me with his tomahawk in his hand. Then I dashed across the ford, and reader I was riding for life and the blue Hornet sure saved me. I lost my hat and as soon as I crossed the canyon I straightened up in my saddle. I ran on to the ranch. Some of the family spied me coming in a long lope and Dave came out and exclaimed, "Billy, what in the world is the matter?" I said, "Dave look, they're sticking in my saddle." Then I went on in detail and explained the whole circumstance, when he jumped on a horse and galloped around to some of the ranches and soon mus-

tered up ten or twelve cowboys, threw a little jerked beef into the sacks and what cold bread was on hand and we all struck out. When we reached the ford of the canyon, we found the Indian's horse, but no Indians. I had hit him in the point of the shoulder and crippled him, so we went up the long slant to the top and there we saw where the whole band had crossed the path. These were the advanced guard of the band. So we pursued them, struck in with another bunch of cowboys had several spats with them, followed them on over to Peas river and turned back. Came back and found our horses all right. Ran them in to the ranch. Thus ended the ride for life, but I will never forget the blue Hornet.

CHAPTER FIVE

Now readers, as I have got over my big Indian scare, I will proceed to give you a brief sketch of my ups and downs through the Confederate War. When the Confederate War broke out I was leading the live of a Texas Cowboy and as wild as a rabbit. When Texas called for volunteers in 1861, I enlisted in the 10th Texas Infantry, Co. C. W. R. Shannon was my captain and R. Q. Mills was my colonel. This was the 15th of April, 1861, so the date was fixed for us to leave for the war.

The ladies all came around. They shook our hands and wept and cried and said, "Liberty, Sweet Liberty, Oh Liberty or die." We dearly

loved those Texas girls but loved our country more. In honor of our country's call, we had to go to war, so we crossed the Mississippi river and was thrown into the army of Tennessee and attached to General Pat Cleburne's division and afterwards to General Grandbury's brigade. Those were two as great men as ever led a command to battle. Both were killed at the great battle of Franklin Tennessee.

Well, reader, I could give you the details of a great many battles I fought in but I will only give you a few of the main ones as I set in to give a brief sketch of my life through the war.

The first hard fought battle was at Chickamanga, fought on the 18, 19 and 20 of September, 1863, and was won by the Confederates. Next came Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain which war lost by the South. Our armies fell back and went into quarters near Dalton, Georgia.

CHAPTER SIX

General Bragg was removed from command of the Army of Tennessee, supereceded by Joseph E. Johnston. So the Southern army lay in winter quarters until the Spring of 1864.

Things began to look awfully gloomy for the South. We had the last man in the ranks that we could get; General Lee losing ground in Virginia and the Northern Army recruiting all the time. It began to look like every hope was gone. Early in the Spring of 1864, General Sherman, who was in command of the Northern Army, moved on General Johnston with such an overwhelming force that he was forced to retreat from Dalton, Georgia to Atlanta, Georgia. The writer of this little volume was right there in the middle of it all. Reader, almost every inch of that road from Dalton to Atlanta was a battlefield. It was one defeat after another. So General Johnston was removed from command of the Army of Tennessee and General Hood of Texas was placed in command. It was one defeat after another and at the great battle of Franklin, Tennessee, our noble Irishman, Pat Cleburne, lost his life and General Granbury of Texas was also killed. All the hopes of the Confederacy was gone. We fell back from Franklin, losing our noblest generals. Lee had surrendered so we fell back to North Carolina and on the 15th day of April, 1865 we stacked our guns for the last time. 110 men went out with my Company C. of the 10th Texas Infantry and eight were all that were paroled. So now to our homes in the different parts of the South without a dollar in our pockets. Four long years we had battled as we thought for our rights and our liberties in the so called

Confederate States of America. I hope no living mortal will ever have to go through the the experiences that the writer of this little volume did. It's enough to make the great Napoleon of the West bow his head and weep.

So, now reader, I will close my little book. The cause is lost; the ship's gone down,

And I was aboard the same,

And she sunk never to rise any more

With all of Cleburne's men.

I hope some day we'll meet again

And walk the gold-paved streets

of the New Jerusalem,

And sing the everlasting song

With all of Cleburne's men.

—W. O. Wynn.

So now reader, to my home in Texas determined to see my little red headed girl that set on them old split log benches by my side in the pine pole cabin on the dirt floor in the Wynn Colony, back in Panola County, Texas. I could give you something that would be interesting to you in regard to our travels from North Carolina to Texas, but for fear that I might weary you, I will leave that off. I'll say, however, that I reached Texas and found my little red headed girl just as pretty and sweet as she was when I last saw her only she had grown considerably, and on the 6th of June, 1866, we were happily married, lived together 53 years, and raised a respectable family. Both became members of the Church of Christ.

Over five years ago the good Lord saw
fit to call her home.

Now, reader, I bid you good bye.

Written by W. O. WYNN.

Sulphur Springs, Texas

The Battle of "Shiloh Hill"

Come all you gallant heroes,
A story I will tell;
It's of a noted battle,
You all remember well.
It was an awful strife
And will cause your blood to chill;
It was the famous battle
That was fought on Shiloh Hill.

It was on the 6th of April,
Just at the break of day,
The drums and fifes were playing,
For us to march away.
My feelings at that hour
I do remember still,
When first my feet were treading
The top of Shiloh Hill.

It was about the hour of sunrise
This battle it began;
Before the day was ended

We fought them hand to hand:
Ten thousand of brave soldiers
On this first day were killed,
All from the bloody battle
That was fought on Shiloh Hill.

So early the next morning
We were called to arms again;
Unmindful of the wounded
Unmindful of the slain.
The struggle was renewed
And ten thousand more were killed;
This was the second conflict
That was fought on Shiloh Hill.

There were men from every nation
Lay on this bloody plain;
Fathers, sons and brothers
Numbered with the slain;
Which caused so many homes
With deep sorrow to be filled,
All from the bloody battle
That was fought on Shiloh Hill.

So now my song is ended
About this bloody plain;
I hope such sight by mortal man
May never be seen again;
I pray to God, our Savior,
If consistant to His will,
To save the souls of all them bodies
That fell on Shiloh Hill.

—W. O. WYNN, Sulphur Springs, Texas.

Robert E. Lee's Farewell To His Soldiers

Headquarters Army Northern Virginia, Appomatox C. H., April 10, 1865:

"After four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.

"I need not tell the brave survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them, but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that must have attended a continuance of the contest, I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you his blessing and protection, with an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.

R. E. LEE."



